

Crowd-Sourced Research as Data Acquisition Tool for Use in the Columbia River Basin

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The Idaho Water Resources Research Institute at the University of Idaho is developing the infrastructure to allow citizen scientists to collect water quality data across Idaho and throughout the Columbia River basin. This infrastructure includes beta-tested analytic tools that can be distributed to local communities and smart technology for subsequent data acquisition.

Key aspects of this program were imported from a long-standing program in the Midwestern U.S. that used citizen scientists to simultaneously (all data collected within the same day) track fluctuations in nutrients and herbicides across much of the Mississippi River watershed from Minnesota to Louisiana.

While some significant region-specific challenges remain to be addressed, crowd sourced data collection has vast potential regarding the stewardship of Idaho's surface and ground water.